

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 3 and 4.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 17 and 18 presented in the amendment filed March 14, 2006.

Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0013061 (Siniaguine). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Original claim 3 recited forming a groove in the semiconductor wafer by etching a second surface of the semiconductor wafer and rounding a corner of the groove by etching the second surface. The claim also stated that the second surface is opposite to the first surface to which the supporting member is bonded.

In the amendment filed March 14, 2006, applicants explained that Siniaguine's method does not form the grooves 260 in the wafer surface opposite to the wafer surface to which the supporting substrate 310 is bonded. Rather, it forms the grooves 260 in the same surface as that to which the supporting substrate 310 is bonded, contrary to the claim language. See page 7 of the previous amendment. In this Action, the Examiner contends that what corresponds to the claimed forming of the groove is not the formation of Siniaguine's groove 260 but the etching from the back surface of Siniaguine's semiconductor wafer 210 shown in FIG. 10 of Siniaguine. See page 3 of the Action.

Claim 3 as amended recites forming a groove in the semiconductor wafer by a first etching of a second surface of the semiconductor wafer and rounding a corner of the groove by a second etching of the second surface. This amendment, and the amendment to claim 4, find support, for example, at page 6, line 27 - page 7, line 13, of the specification. Thus, claim 3 requires two separate etching steps, one for forming the groove and another for rounding the corner of the groove. The Examiner relies on Siniaguine's process steps shown in FIGS. 9-11 for the teachings of the claimed etching. See page 2 of the Action. Since the Examiner says that Siniaguine's forming of the groove 260 shown in FIG. 9 does not correspond to the claimed groove formation and the etching process shown in FIG. 11 does not form any groove as claimed,

the Examiner seems to have relied solely on the etching shown in Siniaguine's FIG. 10 for the teaching of the claimed groove formation and the rounding of the corner of the groove.

However, Siniaguine FIG. 10 shows that Siniaguine's groove formation and rounding occur in one etching step. In fact, Siniaguine explains at paragraph [0045] that Siniaguine's dry etching shown in FIG. 10 forms a groove and rounds the corner of the groove in one dry etching step. On the other hand, the etching of claim 3 is divided into two separate etching steps, one for forming the groove and the other for rounding the corner of the groove. Neither Siniaguine's paragraph [0045], nor any other portion of Siniaguine, teaches or suggests the claimed first and second etching.

The rejection of claim 3 under 35 USC 102(b) on Siniaguine should be withdrawn because Siniaguine does not teach or suggest the claimed etching comprising the first etching for the groove formation and the second etching for rounding the corner of the groove.

In light of the above, a Notice of Allowance is solicited.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952**, referencing Docket No. **606402016900**.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Barry E. Bretschneider
Registration No. 28,055

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Morrison & Foerster LLP
1650 Tysons Boulevard, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102-3915
Telephone: (703) 760-7743
Facsimile: (703) 760-7777